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1988 WINNIPEG HUNGER STUDY

Prepared for

The Food Network of Inter-Agency Group

SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF WINNIPEG

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The use of emergency food is confined to that small segment of the population which is renter households with an income under $21,000 per year. Within this "at-risk" group it is predominantly the single male with an income under $7,000 who uses emergency food outlets. The low-income-family household with children is the other group most "at-risk" of using emergency food.

Because of the way the supply of food outlets is concentrated in the inner-city areas, with an emphasis on supplementary meals, it may well be that the existing level of demand considerably under-estimates the potential demand for emergency food. For supplementary meals, the potential demand could be twice the current demand. For foodkits, the potential demand could be 3.5 times the current demand.

People come for emergency food primarily because they are poor and cannot make their meagre income stretch. In particular, single males have the highest rate of use because, for those on welfare, their budget is considerably lower than the childless couple and family household welfare budgets. Conversely, if all households receive an income of at least 60 percent of the Statistics Canada LICOs, the demand for emergency food will largely disappear.

Nonetheless, a demand for low-cost meals by the single person living in a rooming-house situation may continue due to lack of access to cooking facilities and a secure place to store food.

Accordingly, there are two different policy/program responses required to deal with the problem of hunger in Winnipeg:

1. Social assistance benefits for the single person must be increased to bring them into line with the level of benefits provided to the childless couple and family households. More generally, all income security programs must ensure that recipients' income is equivalent to at least 60 percent of the Statistics

Canada low-income cutoffs (LICOs) to avoid the problem of people running out of food.

2. While income security benefits remain inadequate to meet the costs of living, there is a continued need for emergency food programs in Winnipeg. Agencies providing emergency food should look to setting up outlets in areas other than the inner-city. There are pockets of low-income individuals and families throughout the city who are not currently being served by those outlets concentrated in the inner-city.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The development and implementation of the Hunger Survey result from combined efforts of members of the Inter-Agency Food Network, including Victor Schwartzman, Sandy Hyman, Bob McFayden, Eileen Badiuk, Harvey Stevens and David Northcott.

The Winnipeg Foundation covered costs of the research assistant, and Angus Reid Associates provided data entry services. The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg contributed the services of its Senior Planner, Harvey Stevens, for analysis of the data and preparation of the final report, and also provided office space for the research assistant and handled the financial accounts for the project.

Tom Edge was the research assistant and guided development of the questionnaire, trained interviewers and supervised the collection and coding of data.

The City of Winnipeg Department of Social Services and the Provincial Department of Social Allowances provided caseload statistics for the time period of the study.

A special thanks is extended to the staff of the emergency food outlets who conducted the surveys and to the users who agreed to be interviewed. Without their cooperation and assistance, the survey would not have been possible.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Emergency food outlets have been a feature of the social welfare system in Winnipeg for decades. They proliferated during the 1930's when thousands of men were unemployed and had no recourse to "relief" or unemployment insurance. In the post-war period the Salvation Army, through its Harbour Light and Men's Social Service Unit, has provided a consistent source of emergency food. More recently, other agencies have come to play an important role. In the Spring of 1975 the Winnipeg No. 1 School Division established its free breakfast and lunch supplement program in those innner-city schools known to have a high concentration of low-income families. Agapé Table, an inter-denominationally sponsored soup kitchen, began offering free meals in 1980. It has now spread to four locations. Other organizations like Kateri Mission have also been providing a similar service over the last decade. Most recently, in 1985 Winnipeg Harvest began accepting excess food from producers, wholesalers and the general public and distributing it to agencies that feed the poor.

With the proliferation of free food services over the last decade, a debate has emerged about the causes of hunger and who should assume responsibility for feeding the poor. Some argue that those who use emergency food outlets do so because they spend their money on non-essentials like alcohol and tobacco. Were they to learn proper budgeting skills, they would be able to manage within the welfare budgets they are given. Others believe that people use emergency food outlets because they do not have an adequate income. Were welfare and other income security benefit levels increased, the need for soup kitchens would disappear.

Similarly, there are those who believe the provision of food is not a matter for private charity. Governments have the sole responsibility for ensuring that all citizens have a basic adequate income. In their view, provision of soup kitchens and emergency foodkits by non-profit groups lets the government "off the hook." Thus, the proliferation of emergency food services makes the situation worse for the poor, not better. Others argue that soup kitchens are needed now because the poor are hungry now. Governments may never assume their rightful responsibility and the poor should not have to go hungry waiting for that day to occur.

This survey was developed with the hope of shedding some light on these important policy issues. For several years now, the Food Network of Inter-Agency Group has lobbied the Provincial Department of Social Assistance for those changes to the program recommended in the 1983 Report of the Manitoba Task Force on Social Assistance. In successive meetings with the previous Minister of Community Services and his officials, the Food Network asked for:

i) increased housing allowances for those on assistance;
ii) movement to a single-tier system, and
iii) an increase in the value of the special needs allowance.

Frustrated by lack of progress on these items, members looked to other ways of stimulating government action. When departmental officials suggested a survey of emergency food outlet users be undertaken by them, the Food Network willingly agreed, on condition it be a joint undertaking and the results made public. That condition was not accepted by the department. Accordingly, the Food Network decided to mount its own survey and make the results public. Fortunately, Winnipeg Harvest was also interested in knowing who was using the food it was collecting and distributing. Its Director was able to secure funding from The Winnipeg Foundation, and work on the survey commenced in earnest in September, 1988.

Appendix 1 contains technical details regarding the sample design. A copy of the questionnaire is available upon request.

2.0 THE SUPPLY OF EMERGENCY FOOD OUTLETS IN WINNIPEG

The term "emergency food outlet" is meant to convey the notion of supplementary food given out to people on an emergency basis to tide them over to the next paycheque or income security payment. Accordingly, it excludes such programs as Meals on Wheels. Yet, we know that some people regularly use emergency outlets.

In designing the survey of emergency food outlets in Winnipeg, the study team decided to include only those outlets providing both supplementary meals and foodkits and received food from Winnipeg Harvest. In total, Winnipeg Harvest supplies food to some 150 agencies and organizations. However, only about 50 of them distribute supplementary food on an emergency basis. Of that group, 25 outlets participated in the survey.

It is believed that the final sample includes the vast majority of outlets providing ***supplementary meals.*** The gaps are the programs offered by the Salvation Army. With the exception of five interviews conducted at Harbour Light, no other interviewing was allowed. With respect to those outlets which provide ***supplementary foodkits,*** it is difficult to know how many there are in Winnipeg as many churches provide this service on an irregular and occasional basis. Accordingly, while we believe the survey has accounted for a large volume of foodkits distributed by all the outlets providing foodkits, it is not possible to estimate the coverage achieved by the survey.

Table 1 describes both the number of participating outlets and the volume and type of emergency food they provided ***on the survey days*** by their location in Winnipeg. Charts 1 and 2 also show how the total amount of food--meals and foodkits--provided by the outlets, varies between the inner- and non-inner-city, and by community committee area.

TABLE 1						
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EMERGENCY FOOD OUTLETS IN WINNIPEG BY THE VOLUME OF FOOD OUTLETS AND TYPE OF FOOD PROVIDED - OCT./NOV. 1988						
	MEALS ONLY		FOODKITS ONLY		MEALS AND FOODKITS	
AREA OF THE CITY	NO. OF OUTLETS	NO. OF MEALS	NO. OF OUTLETS	NO. OF FOODKITS	NO. OF OUTLETS	NO. OF MEALS AND FOODKITS
A. CORE/NON-CORE-TOTAL	5	1,922	17	1,372	3	597
- Core Area	5	1,922	12	984	3	597
- Non-Core Area	0	0	5	388	0	0
B. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE AREA - TOTAL	5	1,922	17	1,372	3	597
- C.C./F.R.	4	1,836	6	239	3	597
- L.S.P./W.K.	1	85	8	916	0	0
- E.K./TRANSCONA	0	0	2	208	0	0
- S.B./S.V.	0	0	1	9	0	0

Highlights of Table 1 and Charts 1 and 2

- Meals are provided only in the inner-city. Four of the five outlets are in the City Centre/Fort Rouge area and account for 95 percent of all meals provided.

- Of the 25 food outlets, only five provide meals. Yet, those five account for 49 percent of all the people receiving emergency food.

- 70 percent of all foodkits are provided by outlets located in the inner-city; two-thirds of them are in the Lord Selkirk Park/West Kildonan area.

- The vast majority of outlets provide ***either*** meals or foodkits (22 out of 25); only three provide ***both*** meals and foodkits.

- There are no regular outlets located in either the St. James/Assiniboia or the Assiniboine Park/Fort Garry Community Committee area.

The survey revealed that use of emergency food outlets is confined to renter households with incomes under $21,000 per year. Using the 1986 census data as an

estimate of the total number of such "at-risk" households in each community committee area, it is possible to calculate a per capita level of supply. Table 2 describes the number of food outlets--per 10,000 "at-risk" households--for each of the community committee areas:

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF EMERGENCY FOOD OUTLETS PER 10,000 AT-RISK HOUSEHOLDS (1) IN WINNIPEG - BY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE AREA

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE AREA	NO. OF AT-RISK HHLDS.	(%)	NO. OF OUTLETS 10,000 HHLDS.
1. City Centre/Fort Rouge	19,835	(37.2)	6.5
2. Lord Selkirk Park/ West Kildonan	8,060	(15.1)	11.2
3. East Kildonan/Transcona	7,120	(13.4)	2.8
4. St. Boniface/St. Vital	7,305	(13.7)	1.4
5. St. James/Assiniboia	4,685	(8.8)	0.0
6. Assiniboine Park/ Fort Garry	6,275	(11.8)	0.0
TOTAL	53,280	(100.0)	0.5

(1) Households effectively at-risk of using emergency food outlets are renter households with a total household income of under $21,000.

SOURCE: Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, Special Tabulation of the 1986 Census. Table 20.

From Table 2, we see the uneven access of the "at-risk" population to emergency food outlets. The Lord Selkirk Park/West Kildonan area has the highest concentration, with the St. James/Assiniboia and Assiniboine Park/Fort Garry areas having no regular outlets; yet, these areas contain 20 percent of the "at-risk" households in the entire city.

CHART 1

AMOUNT OF FOOD PROVIDED BY TYPE OF FOOD AND LOCATION OF OUTLET - OCT/NOV 1988

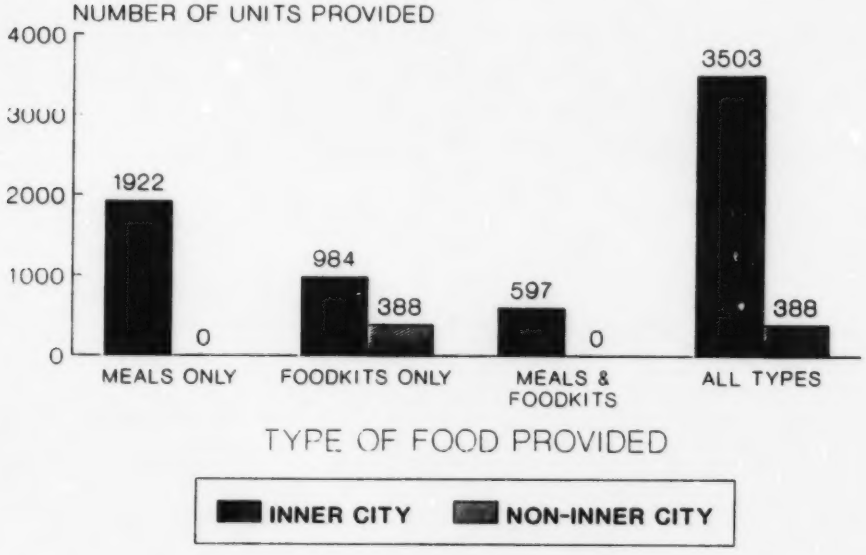
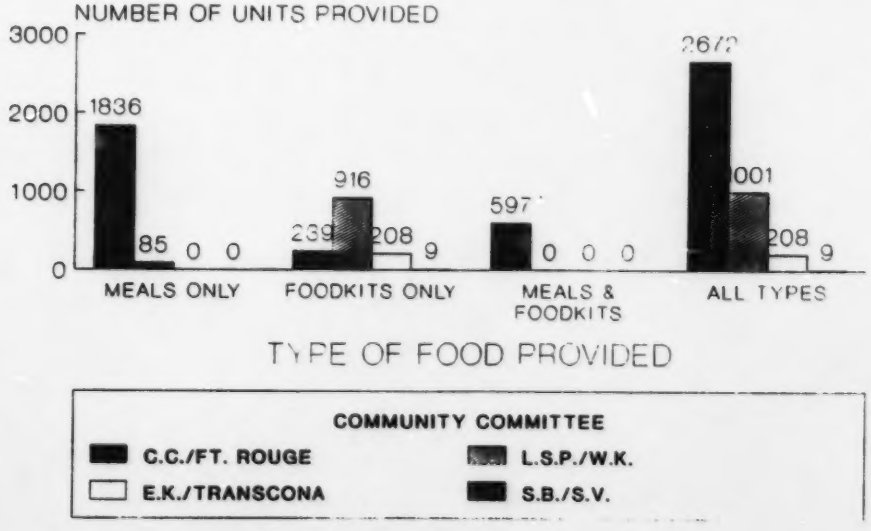


CHART 2

AMOUNT OF FOOD PROVIDED BY TYPE OF FOOD AND LOCATION OF OUTLET - OCT/NOV 1988



3.0 THE DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY FOOD IN WINNIPEG

3.1 The Overall Level of Effective Demand[1]

In total, 8,550 meals and 1,580 foodkits were distributed during the three-week period of the study, between October 24 to November 15, 1988. However, as people were interviewed on only three of the 21 days, the estimated number of meals and foodkits provided on those study days is 3,891. It is this total that is reflected by the figures presented in this section of the report.

Using the 1986 Census data estimates of the number of households, we calculated the overall rate of use among all households in Winnipeg to be 11.7 percent. However, among the "at-risk" households, the overall rate of use is 7.3 percent. Of these households, 1,334 (34%) are family households with children under 18 years. In total, there are an additional 1,770 children in these family households --some 31 percent of all persons depending on emergency food.

3.2 The Frequency of the Effective Demand for Emergency Food

Table 3 presents the pattern of use of emergency food outlets in Winnipeg.

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY OF USE OF EMERGENCY FOOD OUTLETS IN WINNIPEG

OVERALL LEVEL OF USE	NO. OF TIMES USED OUTLET LAST MONTH	USE OTHER OUTLETS?	PERCENT OF ALL USERS
1. LOW	Once or Twice	No	33.4%
2.	Once or Twice	Yes	9.2%
3. MODERATE	3 to 5 Times	No	28.7%
4. MODERATE	3 to 5 Times	Yes	1.6%
5.	6 or More Times	No	18.7%
6. HIGH	6 or More Times	Yes	8.4%

[1] Effective demand is that which occurs within the given level of supply. It does not include waiting lists or the level of use which would exist were the supply to be increased.

It shows that about one-third of the recipients used the outlet only once or twice in the last month and did not use any other outlets. Another 27 percent used the outlet six or more times, with the remaining 40 percent using it three to five times in the last month.

Table 3 also shows that only 19 percent of recipients use other outlets as well.

Table 4 describes those persons most likely to make frequent use of emergency food outlets.

TABLE 4

SELECTED PROFILE OF THOSE RECIPIENTS WHO MAKE FREQUENT USE OF THE SYSTEM OF EMERGENCY FOOD OUTLETS

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTIC	PERCENT USING OUTLET 6+ TIMES LAST MONTH	PERCENT USING OTHER OUTLETS
A. TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD		
- Single Person	27%	23%
- Two Adults	24%	11%
- Single Parent	19%	9%
- Two Parent	20%	14%
B. TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
- Under $6,924	38%	30%
- $ 6,924 - $13,924	20%	8%
- $13,925 - $20,886	28%	11%
C. TYPE OF HOUSING		
- Rooming House	26%	31%
- The Street	62%	86%
- Apartment/House	24%	9%
D. TYPE OF FOOD		
- Meal	36%	21%
- Foodkit	9%	16%

From Table 4, the summary profile of the frequent user is:

- someone who comes for meals;
- someone who lives on the street or in a rooming house; and,
- a single male with income under $7,000.

3.3 The Pattern of Effective Demand for Emergency Food

Charts 3 through 7 describe the percent of "at-risk" households (renter households with total household incomes under $21,000) who make use of emergency food outlets. These percentages can be interpreted as the risk which any one household of a particular type faces in having to rely on emergency food. They are often referred to as take-up rates.

Highlights of Charts 3 to 7

- The single person household faces the highest risk of using emergency food outlets: in the inner-city 19.6 percent of single persons use emergency food, compared to 6.0 percent of two-adult households, 10.7 percent of single parent and 8.7 percent of two-parent households (Chart 3).

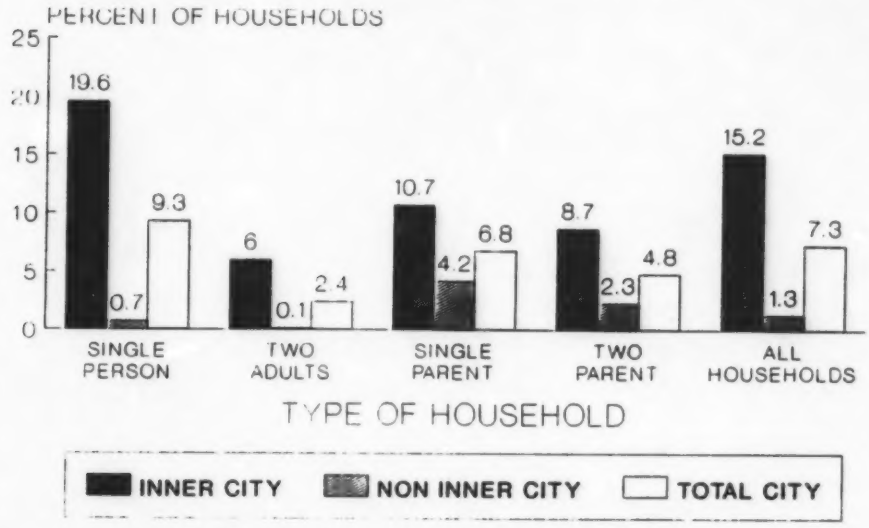
- In the non-inner-city, it is the family household who uses emergency food outlets more frequently: 4.2 percent of single parents and 2.3 percent of two-parent family households compared to only 0.7 percent of single persons (Chart 3).

- The risk of using emergency food declines dramatically as household income increases. In the inner-city, 36.8 percent of households with incomes under $7,000 use emergency food compared with 10.4 percent of households with incomes between $7,000 and $14,000 and only 1.6 percent of households with income between $14,000 and $21,000. In effect, the risk for the inner-city household with an income below $7,000 is 23 times that of the household with an income between $14,000 and $21,000 (Chart 4).

- When the effect of household type and level of income is combined, the differences are even more dramatic! Again, for the inner-city, 56 percent

CHART 3

LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE & AREA



HOUSEHOLDS WITH INCOME LESS THAN $21k
ARE INCLUDED. OCT/NOV 1988

CHART 4

LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY INCOME GROUP & AREA

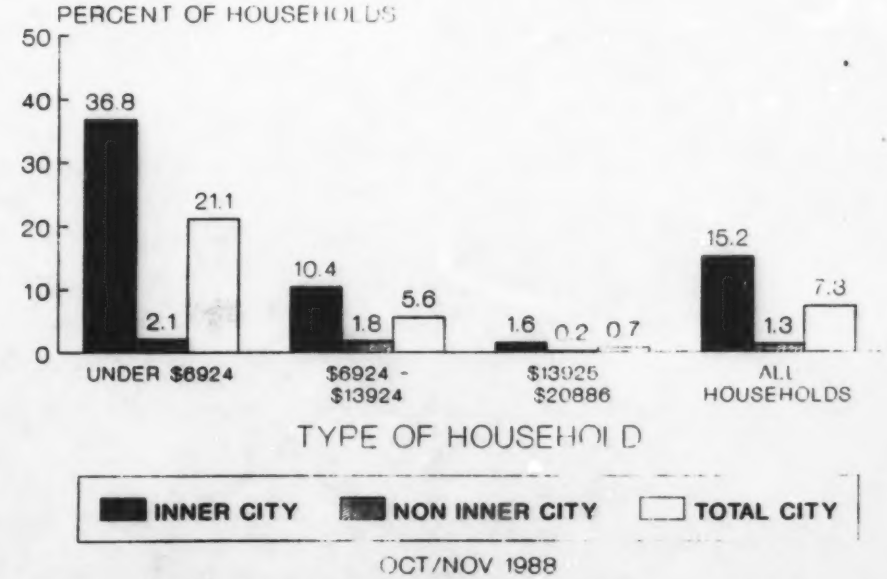


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CHART 5

LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY TYPE & INCOME GROUP

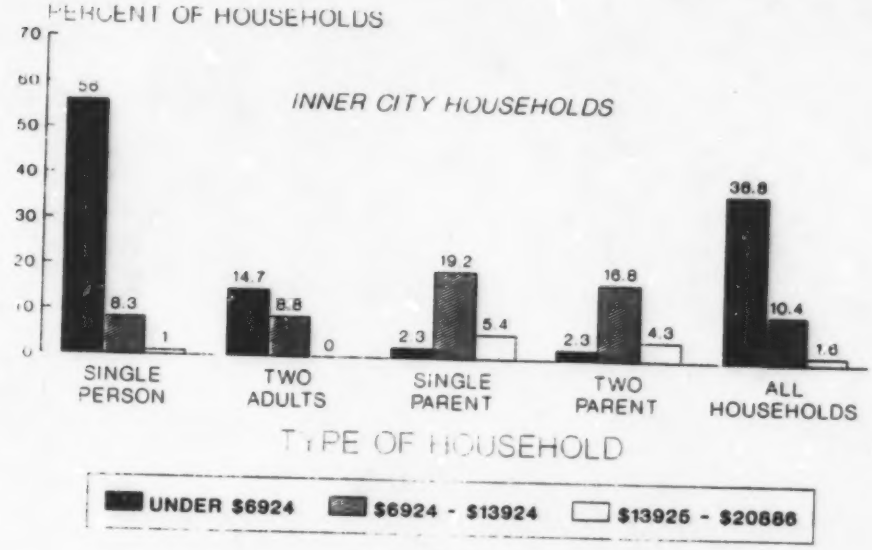

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CHART 6

LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY TYPE & INCOME GROUP

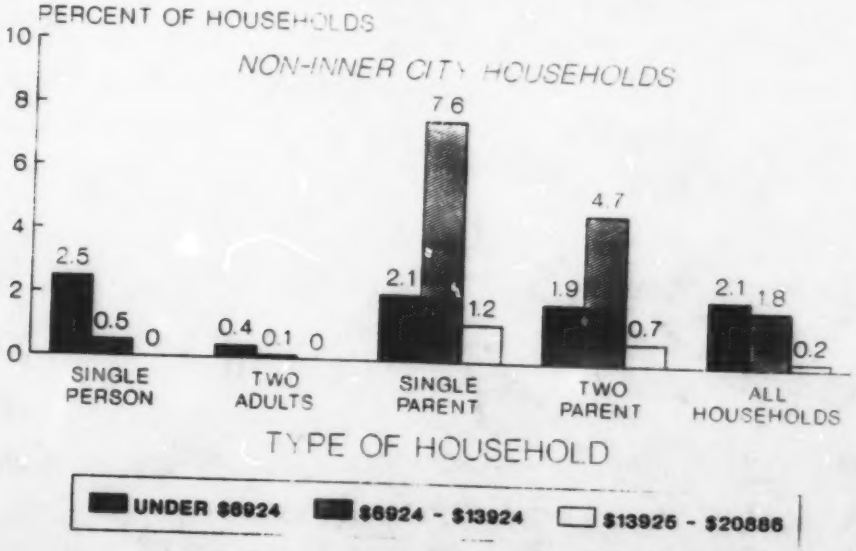

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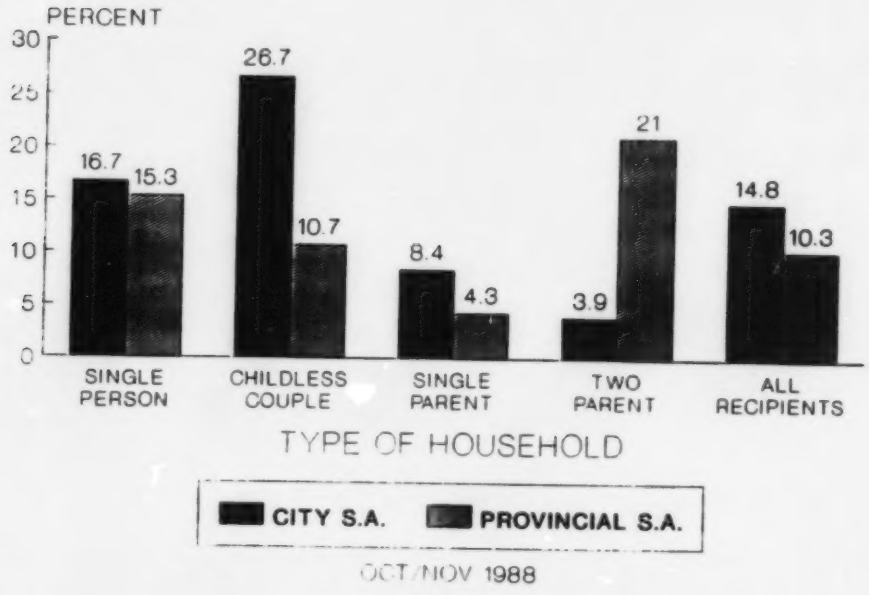
CHART 7

% OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE



OCT/NOV 1988

- of single-person households with an income below $7,000 use emergency food outlets. The rate of use drops to 8.3 percent of single-person households with an income between $7,000 and $14,000 and to 1.0 percent for those with incomes between $14,000 and $21,000 (Chart 5).

- The next highest risk groups are the family households with incomes between $7,000 and $14,000. In the inner-city, 19.2 percent of single-parent and 16.8 percent of two-parent households have the highest rate of use: 7.6 percent of the single parent and 4.7 percent of the two-parent family household (Charts 5 and 6).

- Finally, the third-highest risk group is the two-person household with an income under $7,000. In the inner-city 14.7 percent of these households use emergency food (Chart 5).

- In total, the single-person household with an income below $7,000 accounts for 60 percent of all emergency food users. Those with an income between $7,000 and $14,000 account for another 17 percent. The family household,

whose income is between $7,000 and $14,000, accounts for an additional 16 percent. Thus, together, these four types of households account for 93 percent of all users of emergency food. However, they represent only 12 percent of all Winnipeg households.

- The household pattern of use among those receiving city and provincial social assistance is somewhat similar. Overall, 15 percent of city and 10 percent of provincial social assistance recipients used emergency food during the study period. For those on city assistance, the rate was highest for one or two adults living together and lowest for two-parent family households. Otherwise, the pattern is the same as that observed in Charts 3 and 5 (Chart 7).

3.4 The Potential Demand for Emergency Food

The foregoing picture of the effective demand for emergency food is likely distorted by the uneven availability of food outlets described by Table 2. Both the greater number of meal programs and the concentration of those outlets and the foodkit outlets in the inner-city areas may be causing the observed higher demand in the inner-city area and among the single-person household. The next section of this report shows that the single-person household is more likely to use the supplementary meal program and the family household is more likely to receive foodkits.

In order to estimate a potential level of demand for emergency food among the "at-risk" group of Winnipeg households, we used the take-up rates that prevailed in the two community committee areas with the greatest level of supply. For meals, the take-up rate for householders living in the City Centre/Fort Rouge area was applied to the other community committee areas. For foodkits, the take-up rate for the Lord Selkirk Park/West Kildonan area was applied to each of the remaining community committee areas of the city. In each case, the proportion of households using the meal and foodkits in these two areas was applied to the total number of households in the other community committee areas to arrive at potential number of households who would use these services.

Table 5 presents the estimates of the potential demand for emergency food against the actual demand to arrive at an estimate of the shortfall.

TABLE 5

POTENTIAL AND ACTUAL DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY FOOD IN WINNIPEG BY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE AREA

	MEALS			FOODKITS		
COMMUNITY COMMITTEE AREA	POTENTIAL # HHLDS.	ACTUAL # HHLDS.	SHORTFALL	POTENTIAL # HHLDS.	ACTUAL # HHLDS.	SHORTFALL
1. CITY CTRE./FT. ROUGE	2,198	2,198	0	2,507	475	2,032
2. Lord Selkirk Park/WK	589	85	504	917	917	0
3. East Kild/Transcona	383	0	383	628	208	420
4. St. Bon./St. Vital	549	0	549	718	9	709
5. St. Jas./Assiniboia	183	0	183	316	0	316
6. Assbne Pk/Ft. Garry	424	0	424	596	0	596
TOTAL	4,326	2,283	2,043	5,682	1,609	4,073

4.0 PROFILE OF THE HOUSEHOLDS WHO USE EMERGENCY FOOD OUTLETS

In Section 3, we compared those who use emergency food outlets with the total population of "at-risk" households, to determine what types of households are not "at-risk" of needing emergency food. In this section, we look just at those who use emergency food and develop a profile of the type of person relying on the outlets.

4.1 Their Socio-Demographic Characteristics

In conducting the analysis of who uses emergency food services, it became clear that we had to distinguish the type of food being provided. As the results in Charts 8 to 13 reveal, different types of households rely on the supplementary meal than on the emergency foodkit.

Highlights of Charts 8 to 13

- The single male is the predominant user of the meal programs, representing 74 percent of all those who received a supplementary meal during the study period. Single females account for another 15 percent. Together, single persons account for a total of 89 percent of those who receive meals (Chart 8).

- Family households are the predominant users of the foodkit programs. Twenty-six percent (26%) of foodkit recipients are single-parent families and another 14 percent are two-parent families. Single males are the next most likely to use the foodkits (Chart 8).

- Most of those relying on emergency food are between 25 and 64 years-of-age. Only three percent are under 25 and eight percent are over 65 years-of-age. With the meal program, 56 percent are between 35 and 54 years-of-age. With the foodkit program, 54 percent are between 25 and 44 years-of-age (Chart 8).

- Close to three-quarters (72.5%) of those using the meal programs have incomes below $7,000, with practically none (2.4%) having an income above

CHART 8

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

CHART 9

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER

CHART 10

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROUPS

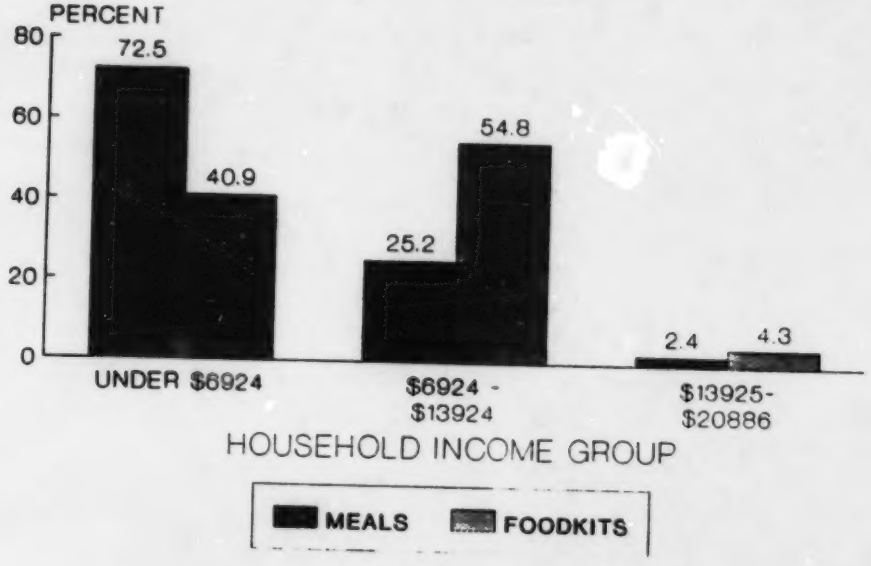
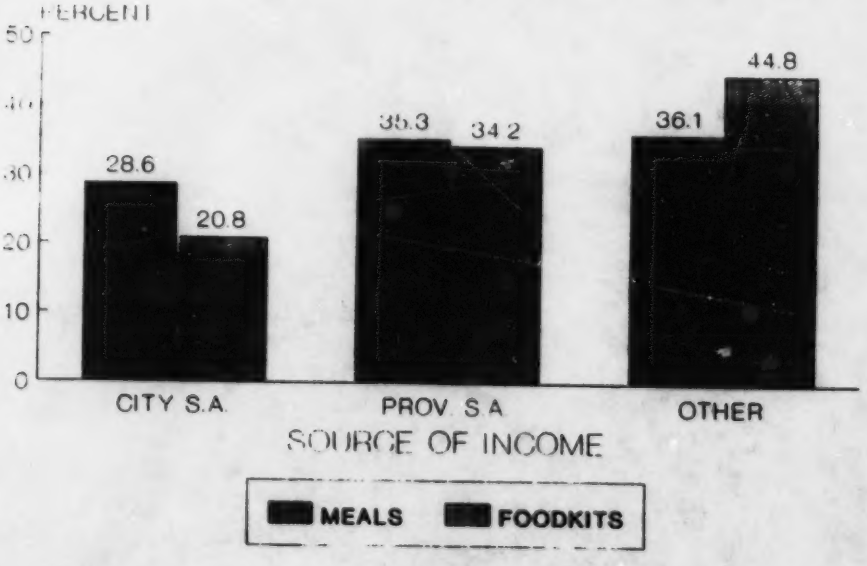


CHART 11

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY SOURCE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME



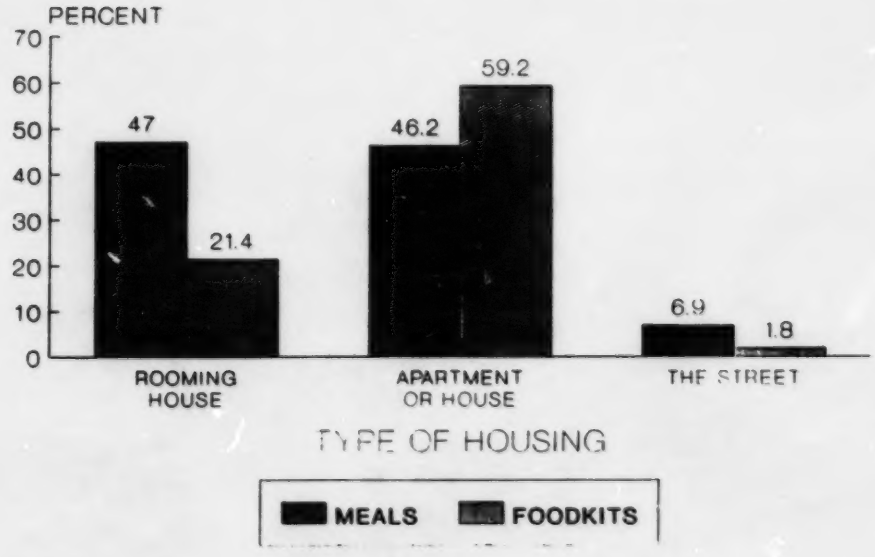
$14,000. By comparison, the majority (54.8%) of those receiving foodkits have a household income between $7,000 and $14,000, with 41 percent having incomes under $7,000 (Chart 10).

- With respect to source of income, those on social assistance are somewhat more likely to receive meals while those with other sources of income are more likely to use the foodkit programs (Chart 11).

- Finally, those living in a rooming house or on the street are more likely to rely on supplementary meals than on foodkits. Chart 12 also shows that 54 percent of those relying on free meals live either in rooming houses or on the street.

CHART 12

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY TYPE OF HOUSING



4.2 Their Eating Patterns and Diet

Table 6 shows the number of meals eaten by the adults who used emergency food outlets the day prior to receiving supplementary food. It also shows how many different types of food were eaten as the supper meal.

It shows that only 31 percent of emergency food users had three meals the day before coming to the outlet for food. However, of that 31 percent, only 14 percent had eaten three or four different foods for the supper meal. Of the 36 percent who ate two meals the day before, only 15 percent had three or four different foods for the supper meal. Thus, including only those who had eaten two or more meals the day before and had eaten three or four different foods for the supper meal, only 29 percent had received adequate nourishment the previous day.

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF MEALS EATEN THE DAY BEFORE RECEIVING EMERGENCY FOOD AND THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FOODS EATEN FOR SUPPER (Percent of All Households)

NO. OF DIFFERENT FOODS FOR SUPPER	# MEALS EATEN YESTERDAY	1 MEAL EATEN YESTERDAY	2 MEALS EATEN YESTERDAY	3 MEALS EATEN YESTERDAY
None	5.0%	1.5%	1.7%	1.5%
One	-	8.4%	9.0%	7.2%
Two	-	4.6%	10.2%	8.5%
Three	-	8.3%	8.3%	6.4%
Four	-	5.1%	6.8%	7.3%
TOTAL	5.0%	27.9%	36.1%	31.0%

Of those households with children, six percent of all the children in those households had eaten only one meal the previous day. Another 19 percent had eaten two meals and 75 percent had eaten three meals.

When one looks at the types of foods eaten for supper, the predominant diet is one of meat, starches and soup. Table 7 shows that 25 percent of the foods eaten at supper were meat dishes, 39 percent were starches and breads and 13 percent were soups. Only eight percent were vegetables and less than one percent consisted of fruits and salads. On average, only 2.2 different foods were consumed for supper.

TABLE 7					
TYPE OF FOODS CONSUMED FOR SUPPER BY EMERGENCY FOOD RECIPIENTS					
TYPE OF FOOD	PERCENT	TYPE OF FOOD	PERCENT	TYPE OF FOOD	PERCENT
Meat	25.4	Soups	13.3	Desserts	4.6
Starches	20.4	Vegetables	8.3	Salads	0.7
Bread	18.2	Dairy	7.0	Fruits	0.1

5.0 WHY PEOPLE USE EMERGENCY FOOD OUTLETS

5.1 Structural Factors

In analyzing why people use emergency food outlets, it is useful to distinguish between the structural factors that predispose people to use emergency food outlets and the personal reasons they give for coming to them. In Section 3.3, we saw that people with very low incomes, and single males, are most likely to use emergency food outlets. In particular, we saw that among those with low incomes, the single male is still the most likely to use them and to use them frequently. Is it because he lacks the purchasing power of others, or because his lifestyle leads him to spend his money on other things?

In an attempt to address this question, we first examined whether the income differences between the single person, the two-adult, the single parent and the two-parent family households are at all correlated with the percent of households in each group who make use of emergency food. We calculated a typical annual city and provincial social assistance budget for the single person, the two-adult, the single parent with two children (one, 7 to 11 years and one, 12 to 17 years) and the two-parent with two children household. We then expressed that income as a percent of the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOS). We then compared these "percent of LICO" budgets with the percent of households in each group who make use of emergency food, both for all households (see Chart 3) and for just those on social assistance (see Chart 7). With Chart 7 we combined the "two adult" with the "single person" household, mainly because we believe that many of the two-adult households are single persons in the eyes of the social Assistance programs.

Table 8 shows the welfare budget, expressed as a percent of the LICOs, and the percent of households using emergency food (the take-up rate) for the four types of households. One can see that the single person has both the highest take-up rate and the lowest budget, while the two-adult household has the lowest take-up rate and the highest welfare budget.

TABLE 8

TAKE-UP RATES AND THE POVERTY LINE STATUS OF FOUR TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

	CITY S.A.		PROVINCIAL S.A.		CITY & PROVINCE	
TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD	PERCENT OF LICO	TAKE-UP RATE (1)	PERCENT OF LICO	TAKE-UP RATE (1)	PERCENT OF LICO	TAKE-UP RATE (2)
1. Single Person	42.4	19.6	47.9	19.6	45.2	16.1
2. Single Parent	51.3	10.7	50.2	10.7	50.8	4.5
3. Two Parent	53.6	8.7	53.4	8.7	53.5	8.0
4. Two Adults	55.4	6.0	56.0	6.0	(3)	(3)

(1) These are the take-up rates given in Chart 3 for the inner-city.
(2) These are the averages of the take-up rates given in Chart 7 for all social assistance recipients in Winnipeg.
(3) The figures for the two-adult household have been combined with those for the single-person household.

Chart 13 describes the linear relationship between the take-up rate and the household's welfare budget for City and Provincial Assistance separately, and for the two combined. Each of the three lines describes what is the predicted value of the take-up rate, given a particular value of the welfare budget. For example, with the City Social Assistance prediction line (the solid line), the percent of households using emergency food will be 17 when the welfare budget is 45 percent of the LICO. The Provincial Social Assistance prediction line indicates that the take-up rate will be close to 22 percent, given the same welfare budget; and, the combined prediction line estimates the take-up rate at 15 percent.

Regardless of these differences, Chart 13 clearly shows the strong influence of one's level of income on the likelihood of using emergency food outletls. Furthermore, the three regression lines indicate the demand for emergency food will disappear when household incomes reach between 58 and 62 percent of the LICOs!

Using 60 percent of the LICOs as the benchmark level at which social assistance benefits should be set, Table 9 describes the current shortfall in incomes for the four types of households that use emergency food.

CHART 13

LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD AND THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

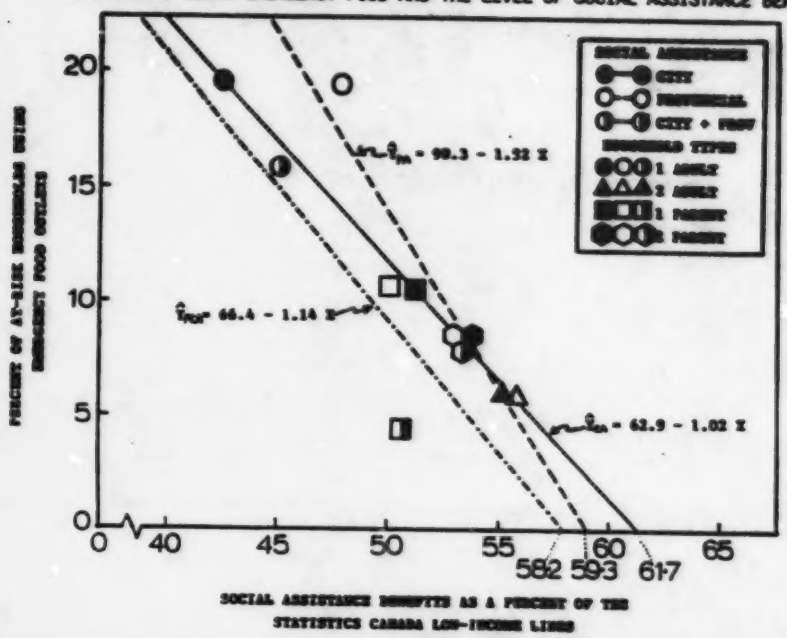


TABLE 9				
COMPARISON OF 1988 ACTUAL WITH THE BENCHMARK LEVEL OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS FOR THE FOUR TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS				
TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD	ACTUAL BENEFITS CITY	PROVINCE	BENCHMARK LEVEL OF BENEFITS	SHORTFALL
1. Single Person	$4,900	$5,536	$5,938	$2,038/$1,402
2. Two Adults	$8,460	$8,541	$9,155	$695/$614
3. Single Parent/Two Children	$10,476	$10,241	$12,247	$1,771/$2,006
4. Two Parent/Two Children	$12,600	$12,559	$14,113	$1,513/$1,554

As a second indication of the current inadequacy of social assistance budgets, Table 10 indicates the percent of those using emergency food services who:

a) are paying more for rent than the amount allowed by their worker;
b) who pay for a telephone that is not covered by their social assistance budget; and,
c) who had unusual expenses, such as school supplies, etc., which social assistance did not cover.

TABLE 10			
PERCENT OF EMERGENCY FOOD RECIPIENTS ON CITY AND PROVINCIAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE WHO EXPERIENCE ADDITIONAL EXPENSES NOT COVERED BY THEIR BUDGETS			
TYPE AND NUMBER OF EXPENSES	PERCENT ON CITY S.A.	PERCENT ON PROVINCIAL S.A.	PERCENT ON CITY AND PROVINCIAL
A. TYPE			
1. Extra Rent	47.8%	40.4%	43.6%
2. Telephone	25.2%	31.3%	29.2%
3. Unusual Expenses	34.7%	37.3%	36.2%
B. NUMBER			
No Expenses	35.7%	30.5%	32.6%
One Expense	42.1%	51.4%	47.7%
Two Expenses	19.5%	13.9%	16.1%
Three Expenses	2.6%	4.2%	3.6%

By themselves, these statistics raise a concern about the adequacy of the social assistance budgets. However, they would be more meaningful if we could compare them with the experience of social assistance recipients who do not use emergency food. If the extent of these problems is higher for those using emergency food than for the non-user recipient, this would clearly indicate that overpayment of rent and unusual expenses is contributing to the demand for emergency food.

Apart from the lower level of income that the single-person household receives, the living situation of many of the single persons also may be contributing to their steady reliance on the supplementary meal programs. Over 52 percent of single males and 42 percent of single females who use emergency food outlets live in rooming houses. Often, this type of accommodation offers no secure place to keep food, and cooking facilities are minimal.

5.2 Personal Reasons

When the users of emergency food programs were asked why they came for food, they provided the following types of answers:

- Ran out of money (49.6%)
- Little/no food at home (40.3%)
- Come to meet friends (14.5%)
- Helps with food budget (11.9%)
- Lost my job (11.4%)
- Inadequate level of income (8.8%)
- Waiting for my cheque (8.1%))
- Spent money on other items (6.1%)
- Other reasons (2.8%)

In analyzing these reasons further, we found that some of them like "ran out of money," "waiting for my cheque" and "lost my job" were correlated with each other. Accordingly, we applied a statistical technique to the data, called "factor analysis," to see whether there were a smaller number of underlying factors that could account for these correlations. Table 11 presents the four factors that resulted from the analysis and the distribution of scores for each factor.

TABLE 11

UNDERLYING REASONS FOR COMING FOR EMERGENCY FOOD

	PERCENT OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS WITH FACTOR SCORE OF:			
DESCRIPTION OF UNDERLYING REASON	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	TOTAL
1. Ran out of money, waiting for cheque or losing job	81.9%	5.0%	13.1%	100.0%
2. Little or no food at home/ had to spend money on other items	63.8%	29.9%	6.3%	100.0%
3. Inadequate level of income/ cost of goods too high	93.6%	4.7%	1.6%	100.0%
4. Helps with food budget/costs too high/waiting for cheque	81.2%	8.0%	10.9%	100.0%

The results indicate that Factor 3 is not an important reason for using emergency food outlets. People are most likely to score high on Factors 1 and 4, although Factor 2 is of medium importance to the greatest proportion of users. Summing up, we can say the most important reason for coming to emergency food

outlets is because people have had to spend money on other things and, as a result, have little or no food at home. Of second importance is the assistance food outlets provide with their food budgeting. As well, they come because they have simply run out of money, waiting for their cheque, or because they lost their job.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of emergency food is confined to that small segment of the population who are renter households with an income under $21,000 per year. Within this "at-risk" group, it is predominantly the single male with an income under $7,000 who uses the emergency food outlets. The low-income family household with children constitutes the other group most "at-risk" of using emergency food.

Because of the way the supply of food outlets is concentrated in the inner-city areas, with an emphasis on supplementary meals, it may well be that the existing level of demand considerably under-estimates the potential demand for emergency food. For supplementary meals, the potential demand could be twice the current demand. For foodkits, the potential demand could be three-and-a-half times the current demand.

People come for emergency food primarily because they are poor and cannot make their meagre income stretch. In particular, single males have the highest rate of use because, for those on welfare, their budget, expressed as a percent of the Statistics Canada LICOs, is considerably lower than the childless couple and family household welfare budgets. Conversely, if all households receive an income that is at least 60 percent of the Statistics Canada LICOs, the demand for emergency food will largely disappear.

Nonetheless, there may continue to be a demand for low-cost meals by the single person living in a rooming house situation due to lack of access to cooking facilities and a secure place to store food.

Accordingly, we see two different policy/program responses required to deal with the problem of hunger in Winnipeg:

1. Social assistance benefits for the single person must be increased to bring them into line with the level of benefits provided to the childless couple and family households. More generally, all income security programs must ensure that recipients' income is equivalent to at least 60 percent of the Statistics Canada low-income cutoffs (LICOs) to avoid the problem of people running out of food.

2. While income security benefits remain inadequate to meet the costs of living, there is a continued need for emergency food programs in Winnipeg. Agencies providing emergency food should look to setting up outlets in areas other than the inner-city. There are pockets of low-income individuals and families located throughout the city who are not currently being served by those outlets concentrated in the inner-city.

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE DESIGN

Winnipeg Harvest provides food to over 150 agencies and organizations. Within that group, there are some 50 that provide mainly a service of distributing food to individuals, either in the form of supplementary meals or emergency foodkits. Those 50 organizations were approached by Winnipeg Harvest and asked to be part of the Hunger Survey. Of those 50 agencies, 25 outlets participated.

The three-week period between October 24 and November 13, 1988 was chosen as the time-frame within which recipients were to be interviewed. Within that period, the providers were asked to pick one day each week on which to interview a sample of the people who came that day for food.

In effect, the sample design provided a ***stratified random sample*** of recipients, where each stratum represents a separate outlet on each of the days interviewing was carried out. In total, there were 62 separate strata. Some outlets interviewed only once during the three-week period while others interviewed on four separate occasions.

In analyzing the data, each of the 363 interviews was weighted by the inverse of the effective sampling fraction achieved within each of the strata. For example, in one of the outlets providing supplementary meals, six interviews were obtained from the 220 people who received a meal that day. With the sampling fraction being 0.0273 (6/220), the strata weight applied to the data on each of the six questionnaires was 36.666 (220/6).

While the providers were given sampling fractions to use on the days they were asked to interview, it was not possible to supervise the administration of the survey. As a result, it is not possible to confirm that a probability sample has been achieved.

CHART 1

AMOUNT OF FOOD PROVIDED BY TYPE OF FOOD AND LOCATION OF OUTLET - OCT/NOV 1988

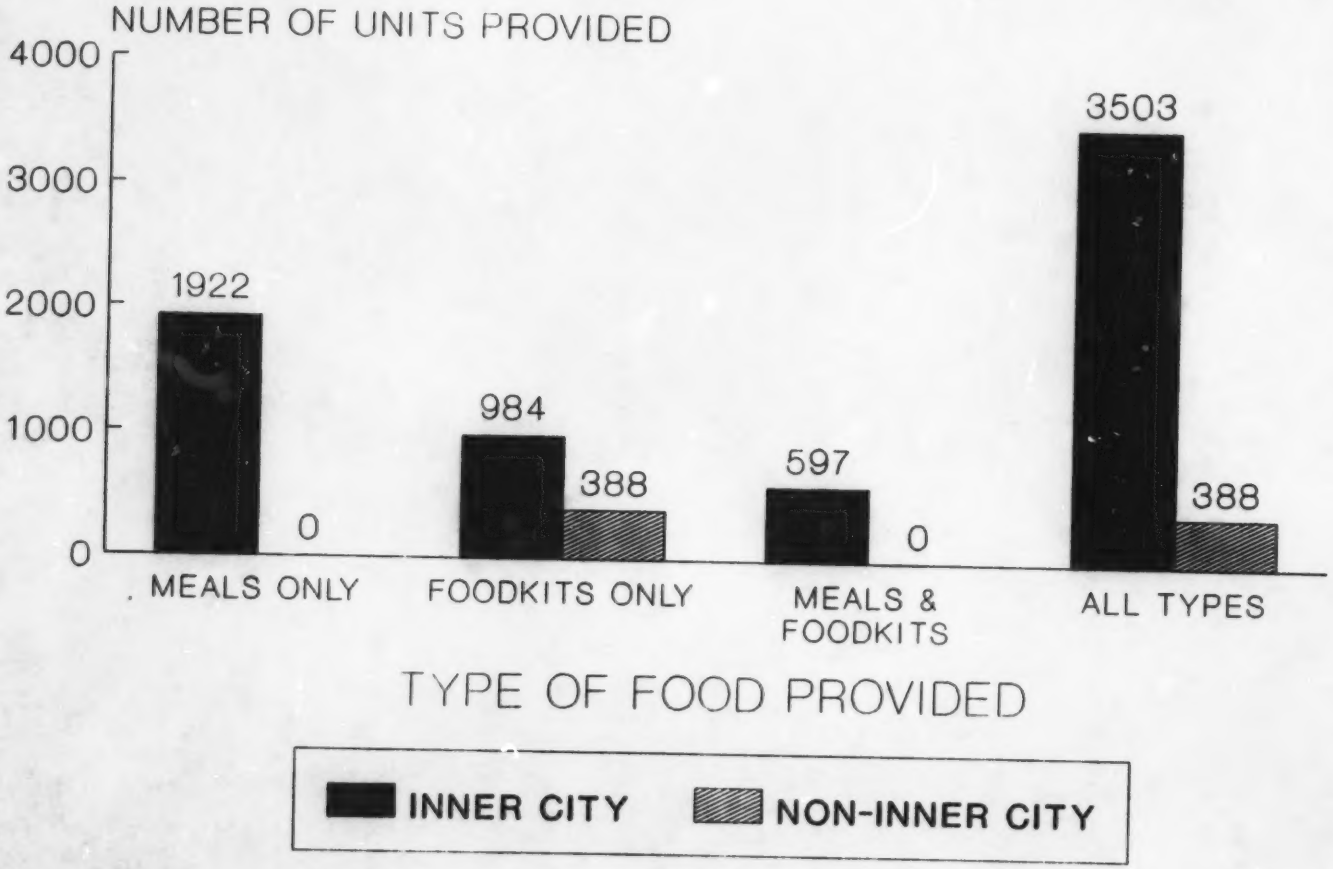


CHART 2

AMOUNT OF FOOD PROVIDED BY TYPE OF FOOD AND LOCATION OF OUTLET - OCT/NOV 1988

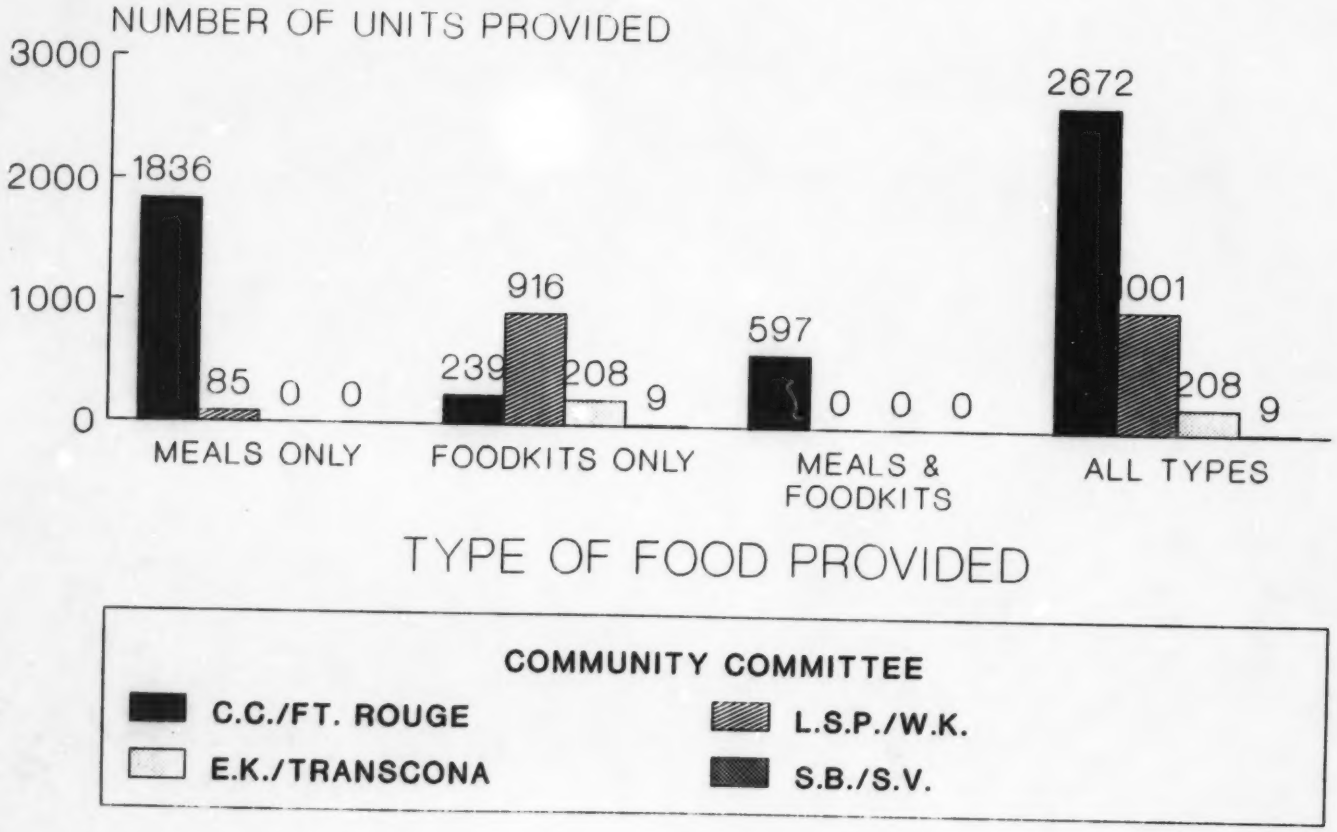
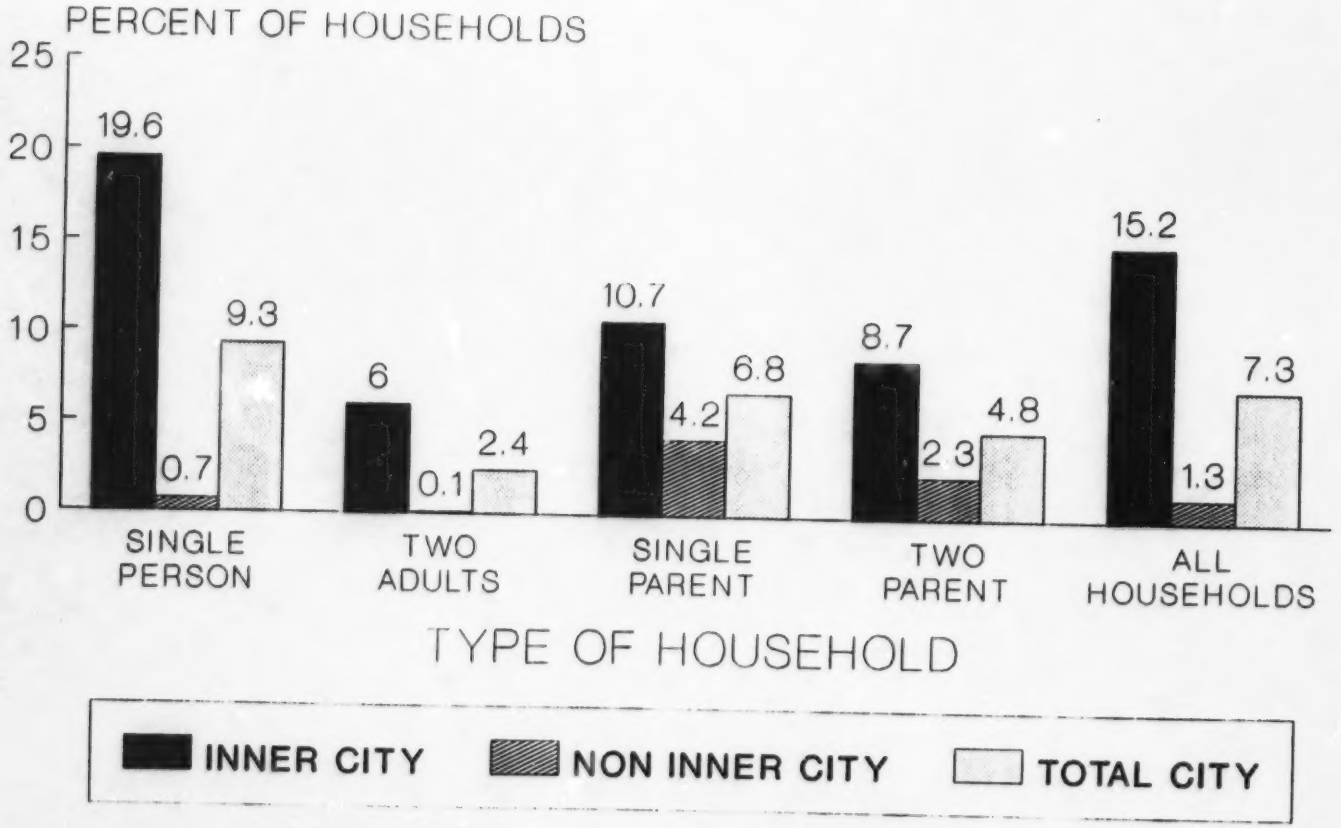


CHART 3

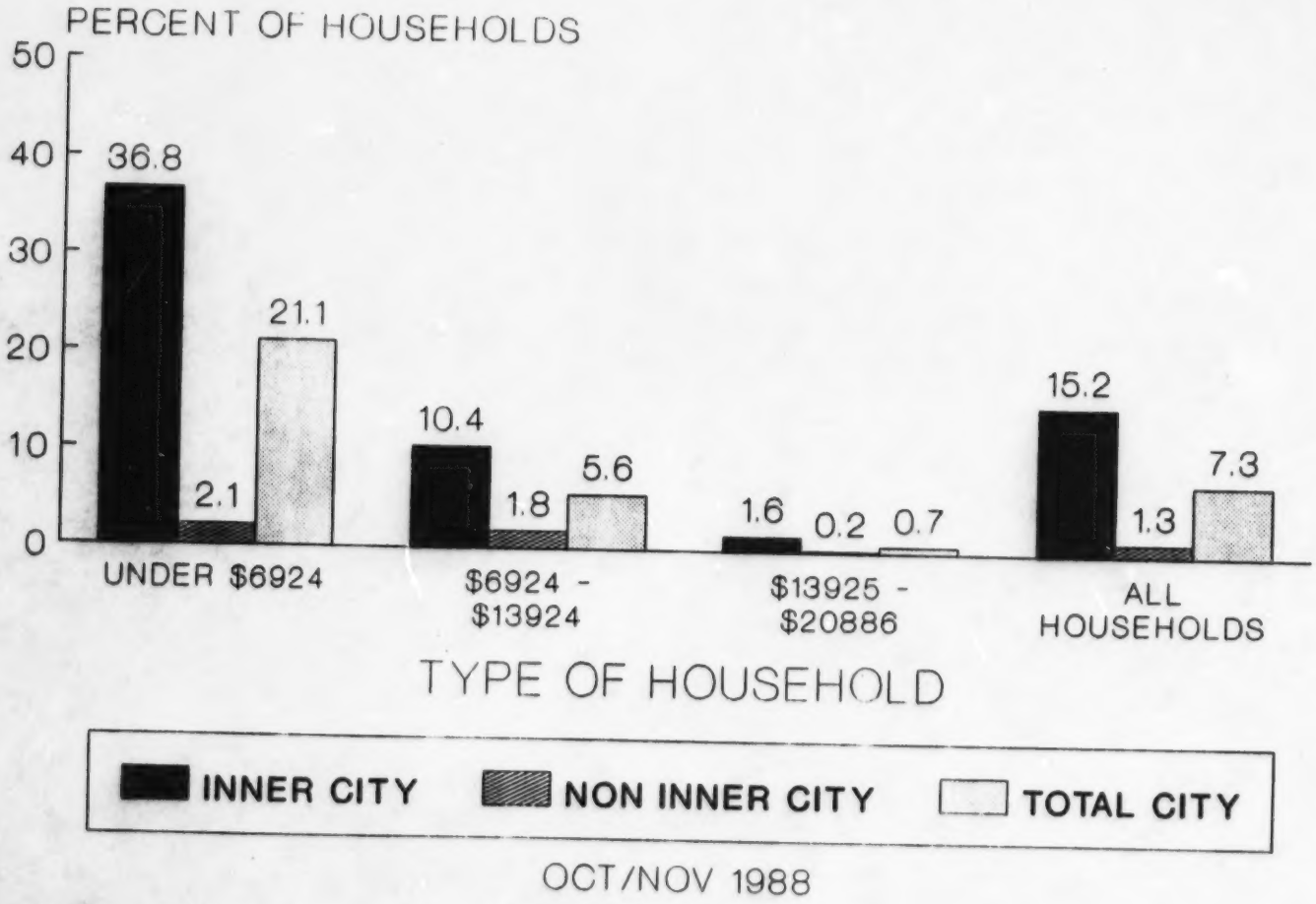
LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE & AREA



HOUSEHOLDS WITH INCOME LESS THAN $21k ARE INCLUDED. OCT/NOV 1988

CHART 4

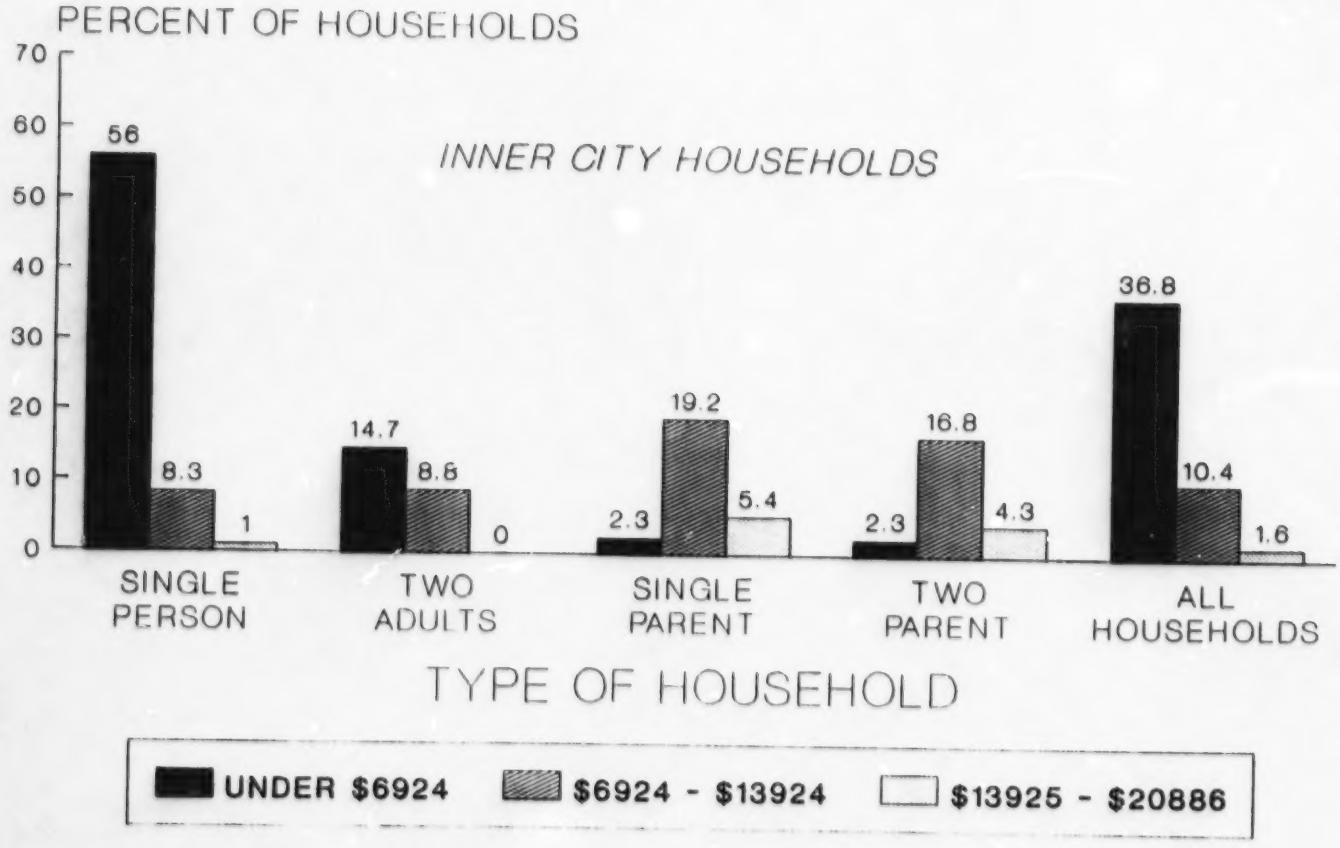
LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY INCOME GROUP & AREA



OCT/NOV 1988

CHART 5

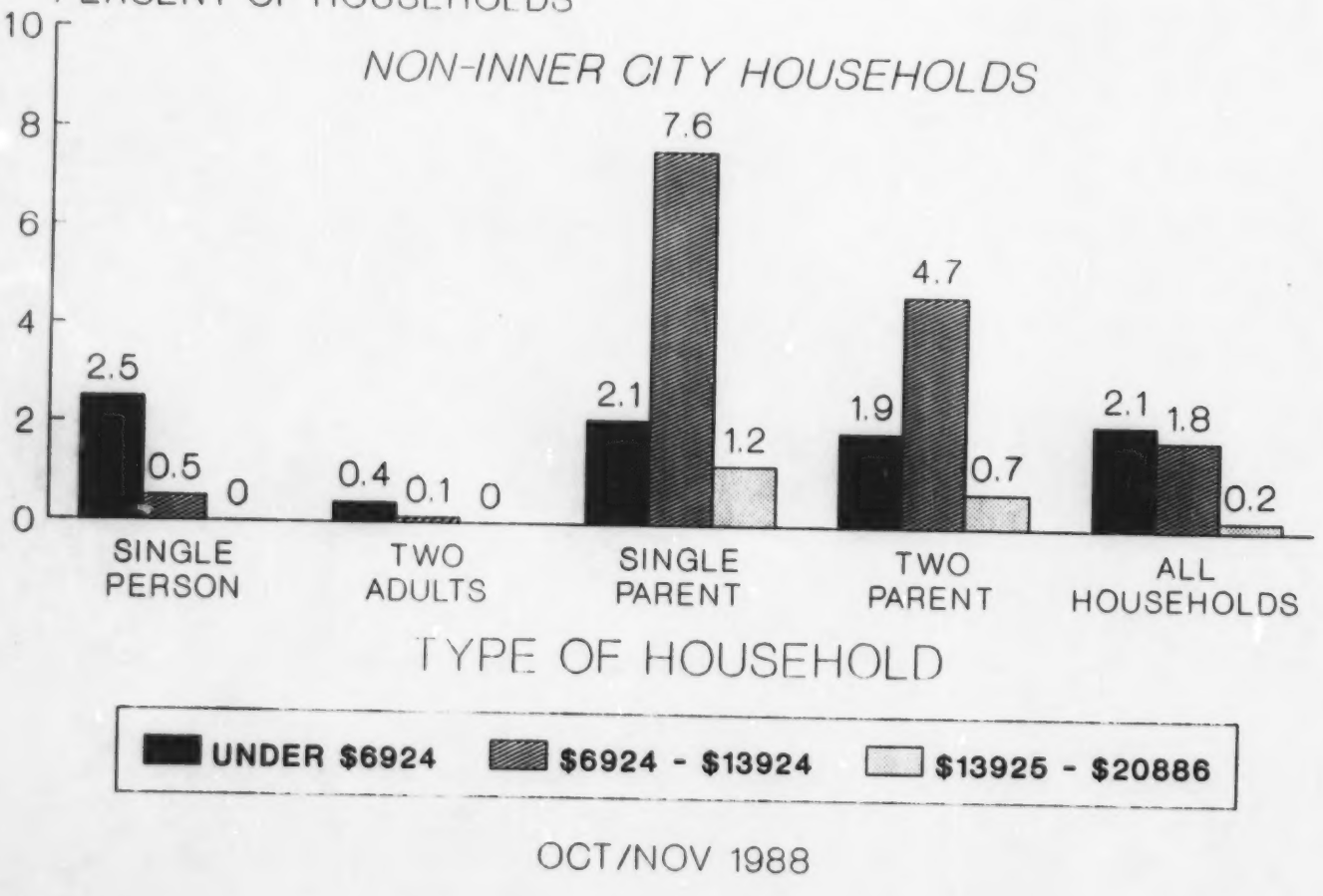
LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY TYPE & INCOME GROUP



OCT/NOV 1988

CHART 6

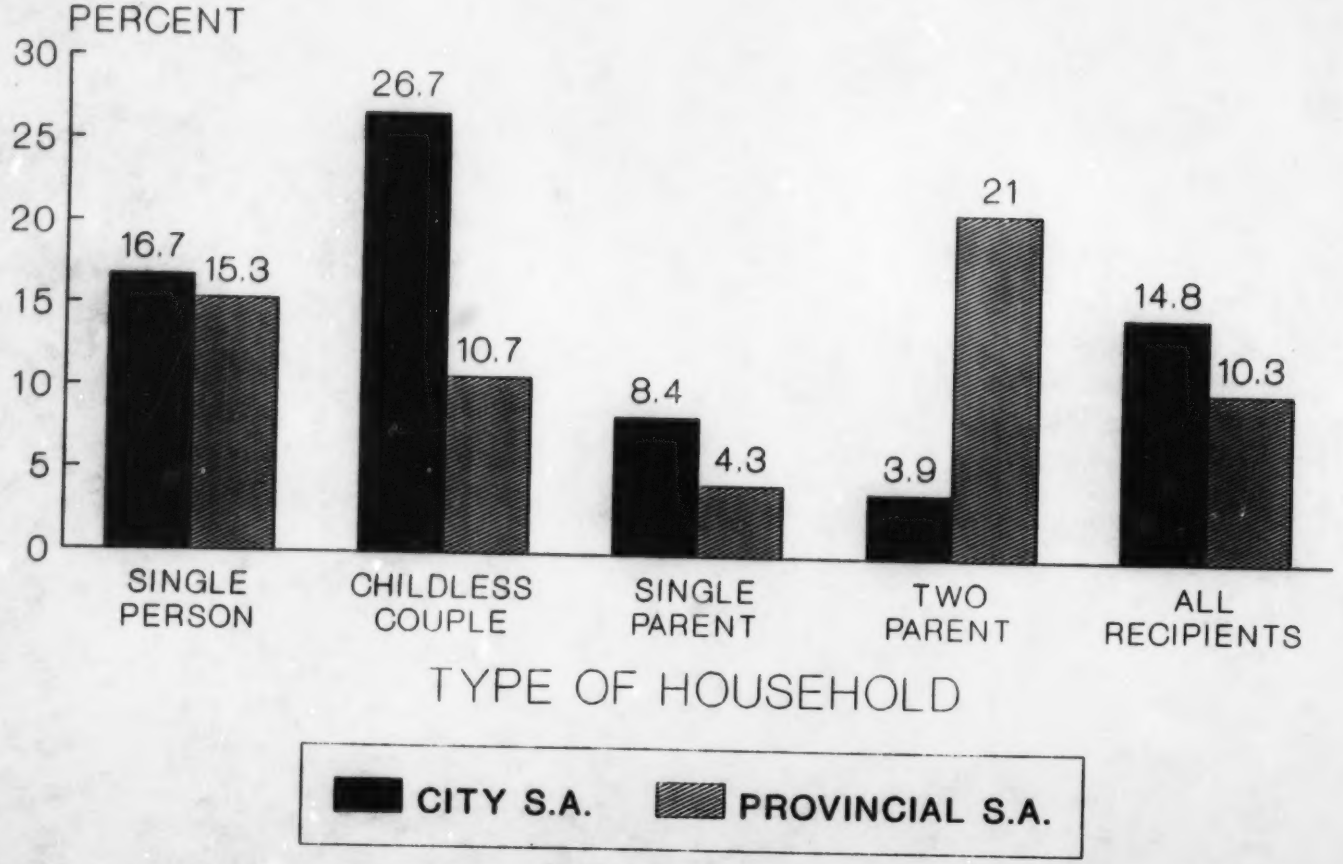
LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY TYPE & INCOME GROUP



OCT/NOV 1988

CHART 7

% OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS USING EMERGENCY FOOD BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE



OCT/NOV 1988

CHART 8

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

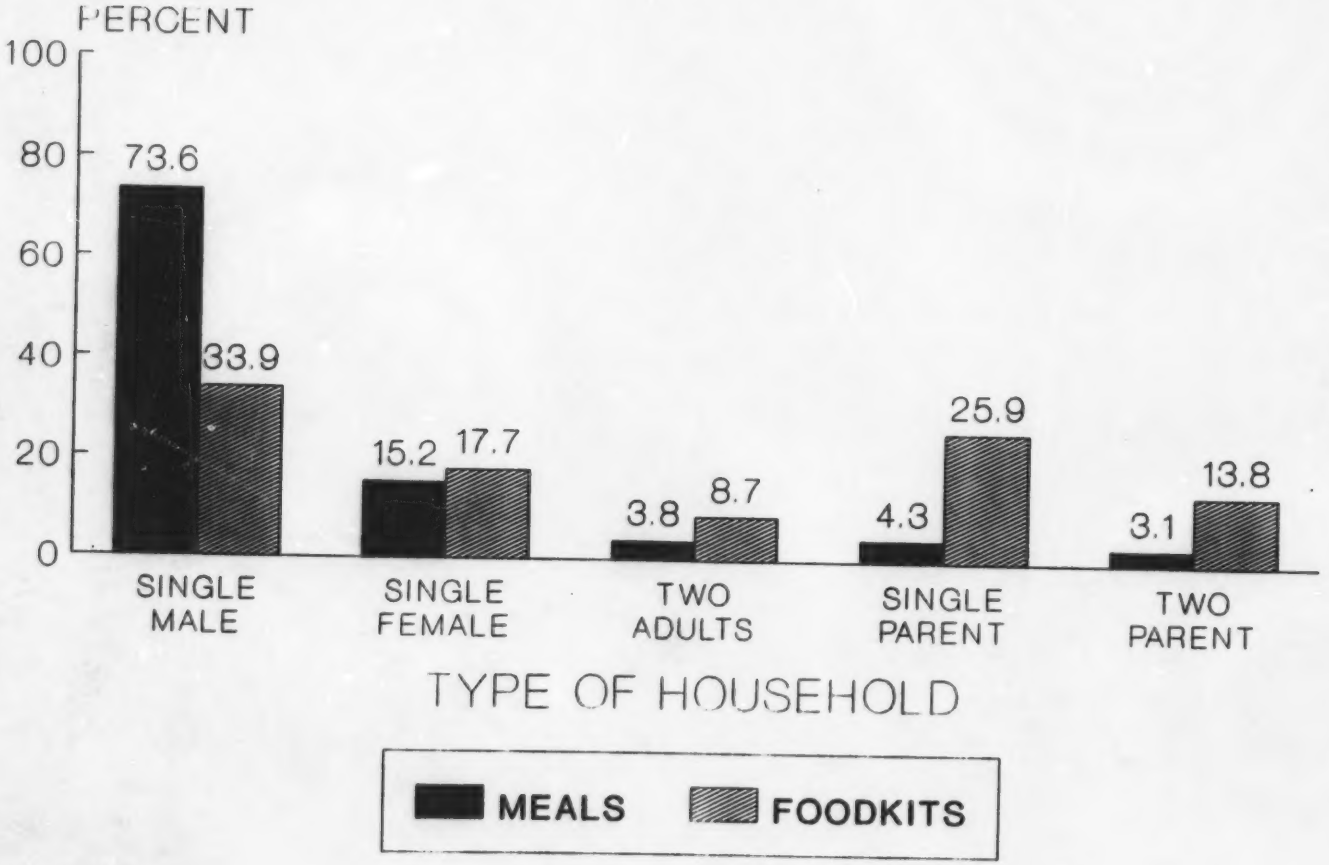


CHART 9

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER

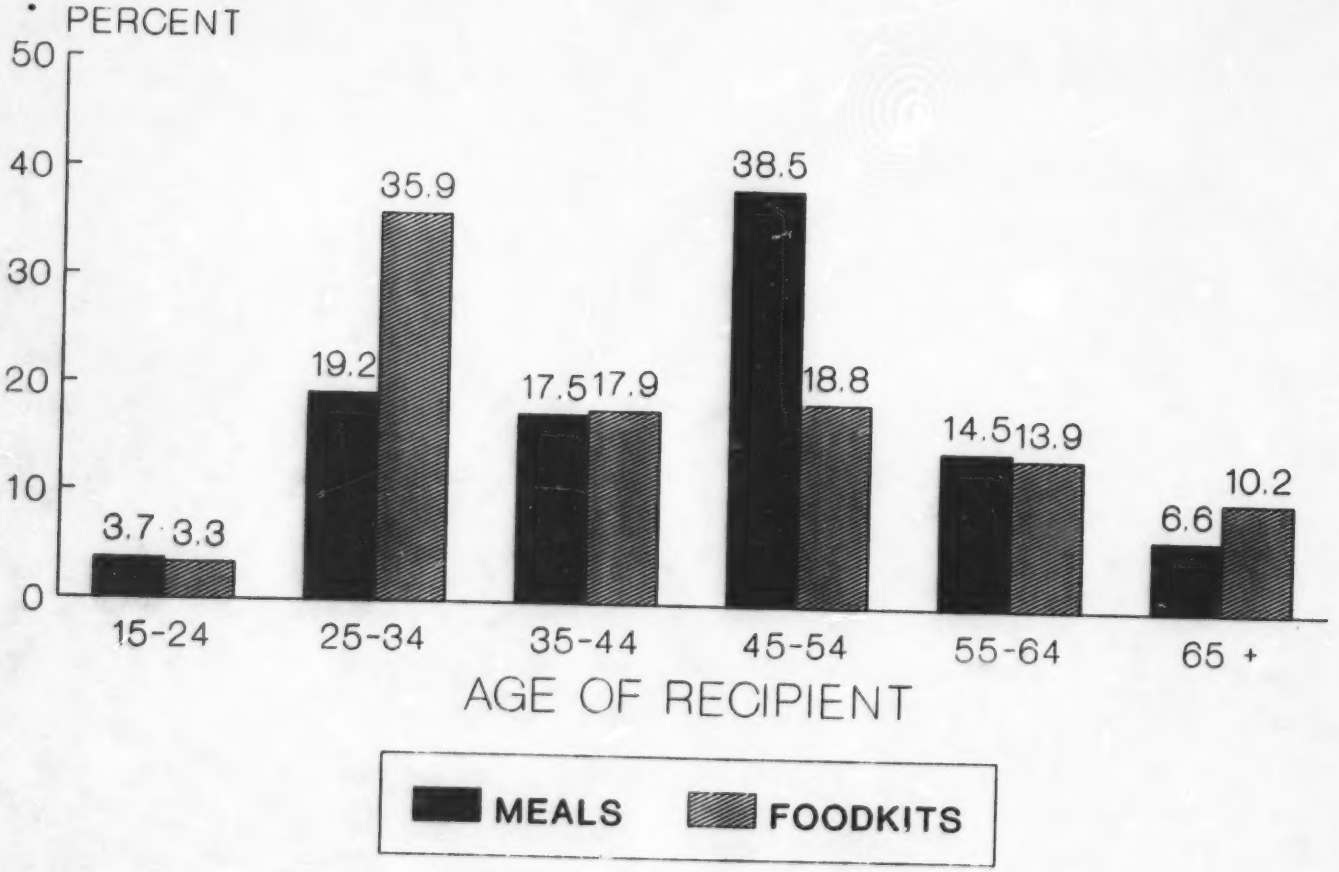


CHART 10

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROUPS

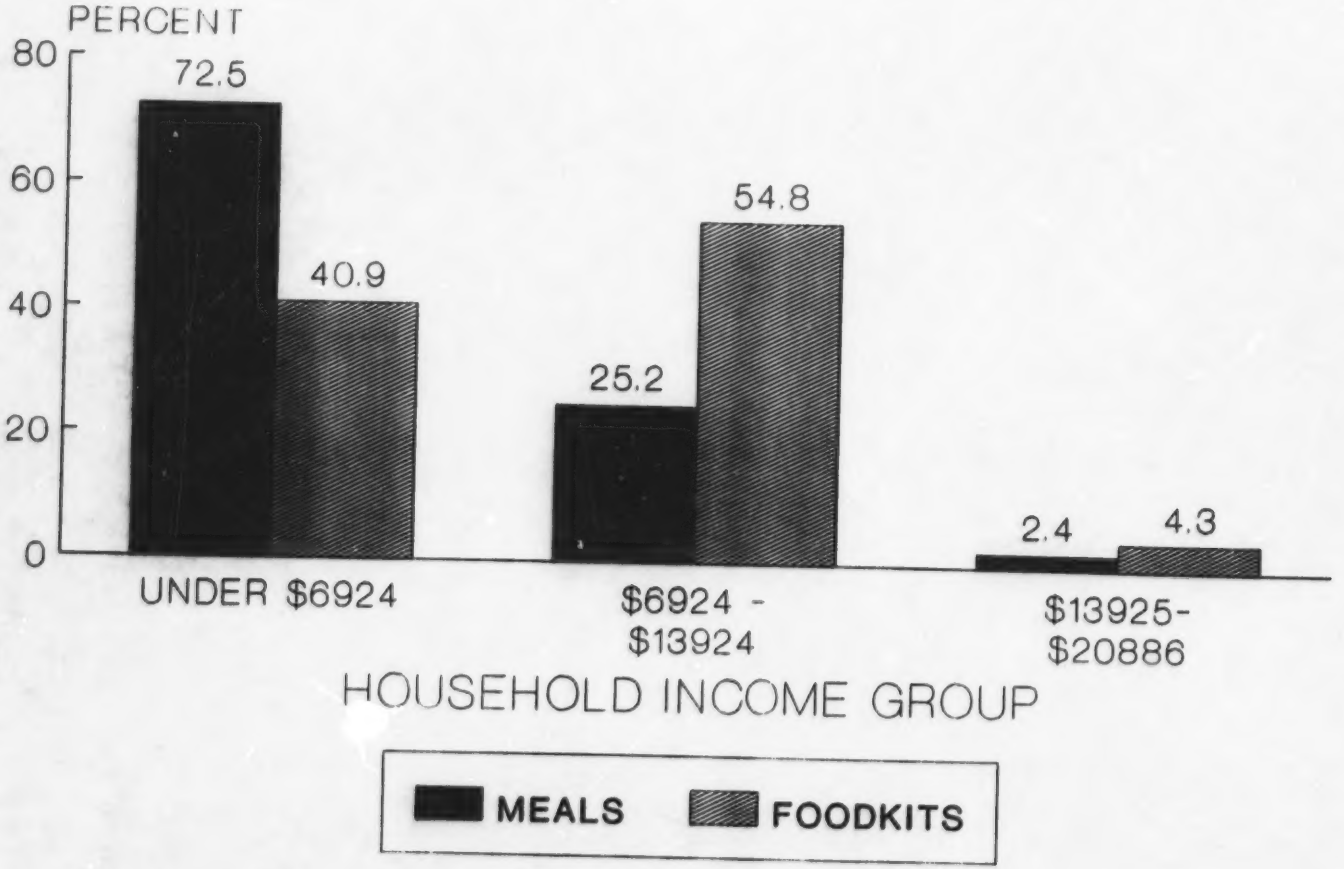


CHART 11

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY SOURCE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

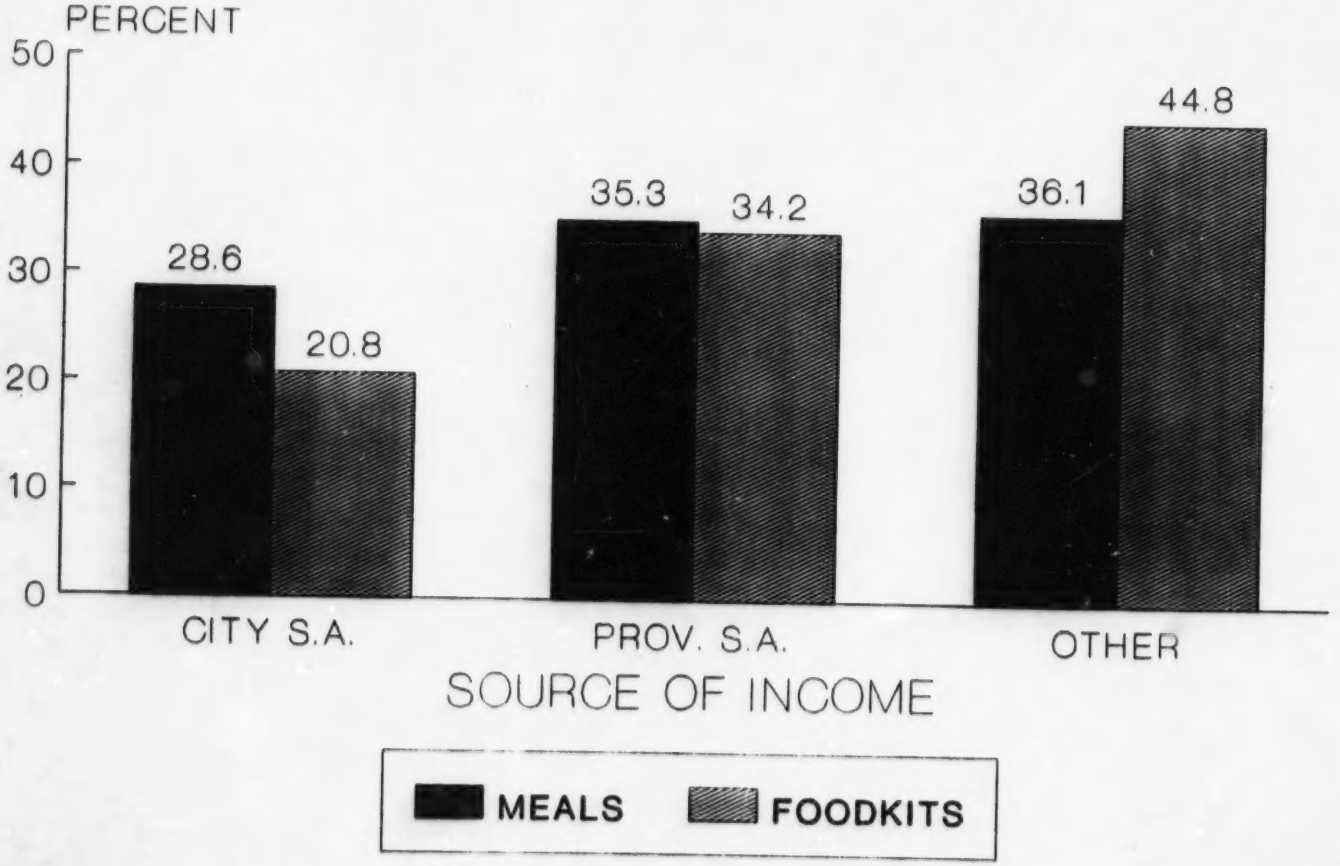


CHART 12

% OF HOUSEHOLDS RELYING ON MEALS AND FOODKITS BY TYPE OF HOUSING

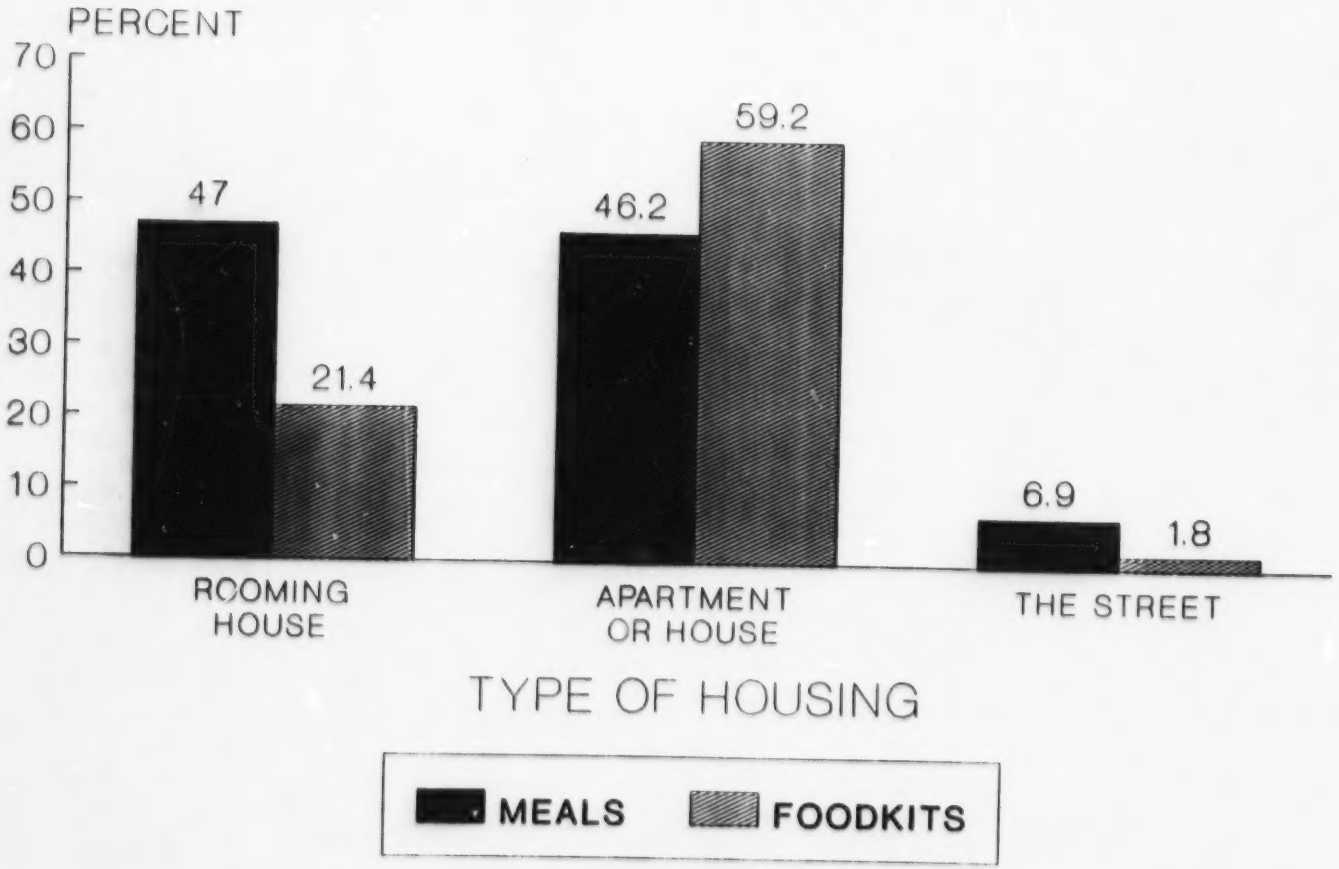
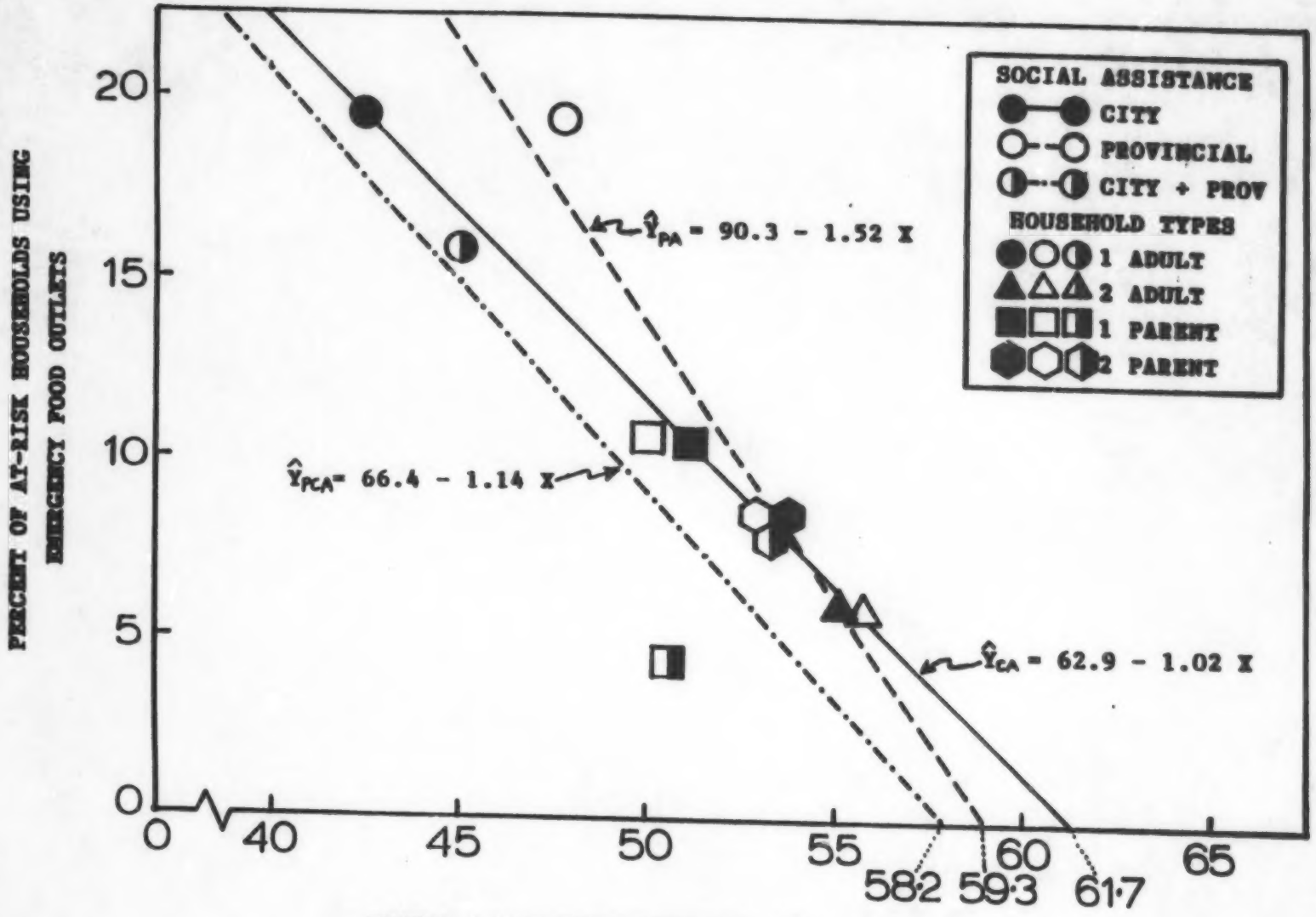


CHART 13: A LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS USING EMERGENCY FOOD AND THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS



SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS AS A PERCENT OF THE STATISTICS CANADA LOW-INCOME LINES